

Message Text

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43

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-11 AID-05 /087 W

----- 030158

R 161226Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 982

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAIRO 3404

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EG

SUBJECT: NEW CABINET ON FRIDAY

1. PRESS REPORTS THAT LONG-AWAITED CABINET CHANGES ARE LIKELY TO BE ANNOUNCED THIS WEEK; NEWSPAPERS ARE UNANIMOUS THAT ANNOUNCEMENT WILL PROBABLY COME ON FRIDAY. IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT SADAT DECIDED TO TIME THE CABINET CHANGES, WHICH WILL CENTER ON THE ECONOMIC MINISTERIES TO COINCIDE WITH ABROGATION OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN TREATY, EGYPTIANS ARE WELL AWARE OF ECONOMIC LEVERAGE WHICH MOSCOW HAS IN EGYPT (SEPTTEL).

2. SPECULATION IN CAIRO, REPRODUCED IN MARCH 16 NEWSPAPER REPORTS, IS THAT CABINET WILL BE MADE SMALLER AND WILL BE BASED ON REQUIREMENTS OF NEW FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND NEW FORUM STRUCTURE WITHIN ASU. ASU MAY GET NEW SYG. AHRAH ALSO CLAIMS STRUCTURE OF CABINET WILL REFLECT RECENT LOCAL GOVERNMENT LAW WHICH "DEVOLVED GREATER AUTHORITY ON GOVERNORS." IN FACT SOME GOVERNORS ARE EXPECTED TO BE REPLACED.

3. PRIMIN MAMDUH SALIM IS EXPECTED TO STAY IN OFFICE AND
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HE, OF COURSE, IS NO ECONOMIST. THERE IS WIDESPREAD

BELIEF HERE THAT SALIM HAS DONE A MORE THAN CREDITABLE JOB AS PRIMIN, SUCCESSFULLY EFFACING HIS IMAGE AS A PROFESSIONAL COP AND GAINING RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR HIS LOW-KEY BUT EFFICIENT HANDLING OF GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS. HE HAS NOT, OF COURSE, SUCCEEDED IN THE ECONOMIC FIELD, THOUGH NOT FOR LACK OF TRYING. SADAT'S APPARENT DECISION TO KEEP HIM IN OFFICE HIS, ALMOST CERTAINLY REFLECTION OF PRESIDENT'S CONCERN ABOUT INTERNAL SECURITY, PARTICULARLY SHOULD SOVIETS DECIDE TO GO ALL OUT TO REMOVE SADAT FROM OFFICE BY INTERNAL SUBVERSION.

4. ON THE ECONOMIC SIDE, MANY BELIEVE THAT SADAT WILL ENDEAVOR, AS HE DID LAST TIME, TO PERSUADE ECONOMIST OR FINANCIER OF DISTINCTION TO SERVE AS A DEPRIMIN WITH COORDINATION AUTHORITY. WE HAVE PREVIOUSLY REPORTED THE NAMES OF LEADING CANDIDATES FOR ECONOMIC MINISTERIES (CAIRO 1063). THE ONLY OTHER CABINET POST WHICH IS ENGAGING CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION IS THAT OF MININFO, PRESENTLY FILLED AD INTERIM BY MINCULTURE SIBA'L. IN PRESS CIRCLES HERE, FAHMY IS TALKED OF AS THE REAL ACTING MININFO ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS, SO MANY BELIEVE HE WILL ENDEAVOR INSERT ONE OF HIS OWN PEOPLE, SUCH AS HIS OFFICE DIRECTOR AL-BAZ, IN THAT SLOT. TAHSIN BASHIR, WHOSE PRESS EXPERIENCE AND PRESENT POSITION AS SADAT'S PRESS ADVISOR SHOULD MAKE HIM FRONT RUNNER, HAS TOLD US HE WILL NEVER ACCEPT THE JOB BECAUSE FAHMY WILL NOT LET GO OF MINFO. THERE ARE, OF COURSE, OTHER CANDIDATES, SUCH AS HIGHER PRESS COUNCIL DIRECTOR AL-SAWI WHO WOULD ACCEPT WITH ALACRITY, WHATEVER THE CONDITIONS. IT IS POSSIBLE SIBA'L MAY ALSO LOSE HIS POST AS MINCULTURE (TO RASHAD RUSHDI) TO SHOW PRESIDENTIAL REPONSIVENESS TO ASSEMBLY'S RESOLUTION OF 1975 THAT CABINET MINISTERS SHOULD NOT HOLD OTHER IMPORTANT POSTS (SIBA'L IS SYG OF AAPSO). THERE ARE ALSO REPORTS THAT AISHA RATIB WILL BE OUT AS MINSOCIALAFFAIRS, BUT NO PUTATIVE SUCCESSOR IS BEING MOOTED.

5. WITH ABROGATION OF SOVIET-EGYPTIAN TREATY, FAHMY WOULD APPEAR TO BE MORE SECURE THAN EVER AND GAMASY, TOO, IS ASSUMED TO BE STRONG IN HIS DEPRIMIN/MINWAR POSITION.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, PARTY STRENGTH, REORGANIZATIONS, ECONOMIC TRENDS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 MAR 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976CAIRO03404
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760099-0294
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760358/aaaabynh.tel
Line Count: 107
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW CABINET ON FRIDAY
TAGS: PINT, EG, (SADAT, ANWAR)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006